

Home Grown Peppers: Beginners Guide To Growing Peppers & Chili

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HOME GROWN PEPPERS

**BEGINNERS GUIDE TO
GROWING PEPPERS & CHILI**



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Beginners Guide to Growing Peppers and Chili

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Introduction

There is nothing like the natural fruits and vegetables grown organically without artificial enhancers. The nutritional value of each fruit and vegetable makes it one of the best meals to consume – even in raw state. The exotic flavors and colors of each variety is an experience to behold. It is a unique addition to your meal every time!

One of these exciting natural produce would be peppers. They can be found in different colors, shapes and sizes that define the unique taste of each. While the small ones add a spicy touch to your preparations, the large ones are likely to smooth down the spices while contributing a unique flavor of its own.

These are one of the most common vegetables. You can find rows upon rows of peppers stocked neatly in supermarkets and grocery stores waiting for you. Every third recipe that you look through is likely to have peppers incorporated in some form or the other.

Most of the salads are practically incomplete without the addition of peppers. With such widespread demand, it is natural for the quality of produce to decline.

You need to look far and wide and search thoroughly to find fresh organic peppers. However, there is a simpler solution to this problem – cultivate the peppers yourself. They can easily and effectively be grown in your backyard.

Moreover, organic peppers are known to have a flavor infinitely better than the artificially bred ones. So you can enjoy nutritious, healthy and fresh peppers right from your backyard and add them directly into your meals! All the more reason to have a natural “free” stock every time you step into the kitchen!

Why Grow Peppers?



Why would you want to grow peppers at home? For the simplest reason: it's fresh, healthier and taste better!

These days the fertilizers and chemicals used during the cultivation phase are laden with artificial enhancers. These non-natural additions to the plants/seeds make it grow rapidly and bear fruit frequently. This is necessary to meet the mounting demand for fresh fruits and vegetables.

However, lesser known fact is this – the chemicals added to these plantations tend to become a part of the plant. This means that while you consume such natural produce, you are consuming the chemicals as well. While they may not have any apparent disadvantage with respect to the plant, it is not likely to prove as safe for you.

This is one of the leading reasons for gastrointestinal problems in people (second only to consuming junk food). These chemicals can accumulate inside your body and pave the way for further medical

complications in future.

While it is not wholly possible to eliminate this vegetable from your diet – there are quite a few unparalleled nutritional benefits of peppers (covered in the next part) besides its taste and color appeal – it is quite possible to make sure the foods you consume are organic and pure.

The easiest and the most viable solution to this problem are to grow your own peppers at home. This does not only relieve you from all kinds of suspicions about the quality of this vegetable; it also ensures you have the tastiest and freshest supply of peppers as and when you need it!

Cultivating peppers is easy and will be covered throughout this eBook. There are several nutritional advantages of using peppers in your diet. Read through the next section to understand how and in what ways peppers can impact your health.

Start making better choices today for a promising tomorrow!

Benefits of Peppers

Nothing in this world exists without a reason. Nature does not only beautify your surroundings and impact your mood positively; it also serves as a practically inexhaustible supply of fresh and nutritious foods you can eat without worrying about side-effects, gastrointestinal disorders or any other problems. It is safe, healthy and a nutritious burst of energy.

Talking about nutritious fresh produce, did you know that peppers are a rich source of Vitamins A, C and K? The strong tangy flavor of red peppers in particular can be attributed to these vitamins as it contains a significantly larger amount of these nutrients when compared with other varieties.

These vitamins have antioxidant properties that help in regulating cell production in the body. It is found to be helpful in preventing cell damage, uncontrolled multiplication of cells (in other words, cancers), and cell malfunction.

It can protect you from age related diseases as well as boost the immune system for better tackling strategies against “enemy invasions”. Moreover, it is quite effective in relieving inflammation (as in arthritis and asthma), strengthening bones and stimulating blood flow.

Besides this, peppers are known to contain lycopene, beta-cryptoxanthin, phytochemicals and fibers. These chemicals are collectively categorized as carotenoids. They help in battling cancers, reversing the effects of smoking, reducing cholesterol, promoting heart health, advocating gastrointestinal health, encouraging the burning of calories and lots more!

Rest assured this is just a gist of the nutritional benefits of peppers. If truth be told, there are a million mysteries hidden behind the bitter

tangy flavor of peppers. It is an absolute must-include ingredient in your daily diet.

You can protect yourself from costly health problems (in future) by adequately including these crunchy pepper additions in your diet regime. Once you have fallen in love with the bitter sweet flavor of peppers, it becomes almost impossible to forego them! You try them once, and you are on them forever!

Pepper Types



Did you think there were only two or three varieties of peppers available in the market? It is a very common misconception in people.

In reality, there are more than a dozen different and unique varieties of peppers – so much so that it becomes impossible to incorporate them all in a handbook! We will still give it our best try and hope to do justice with the vast pepper family.

The pepper family can broadly (rather too broadly) be distinguished into two categories – the crunchy bland ones with a sweet bitter taste and the spicy hot ones that ignite a fire in your soul!

The former ones may be used in meals in abundant quantities while the latter is surely added in carefully controlled quantities to make the food edible. There are several different variations in each category.

For instance, the spicy pepper family has several members with varying shapes, sizes and intensity of flavors.

It includes (but is not limited to):

- Carolina Reaper
- Trinidad Moruga Scorpion
- New Mexico Scorpion
- Infinity Chili Pepper
- The Ghost Pepper
- Red Savina Habanero
- Devil's Tongue
- Fatalii
- Habanero Pepper
- Datil
- Jamaican Hot
- Pequin Pepper
- Carolina Cayenne
- Bahamian Chili Pepper
- Tabiche Chili Pepper
- Charleston Hot Chili Pepper
- Tepin
- Malagueta Chili Pepper
- Diablo Grande Chili Pepper
- New Mex Hot Chili Pepper
- Rocoto Orange Chili Pepper
- Thai Chili Pepper
- Peri-Peri
- Tein Tsin Pepper
- Yatsufusa Chili Pepper
- Santaka Chili Pepper
- Guntur Sannam Chili Pepper
- Dundicut Chili Pepper
- Cayenne Chili Pepper
- Tabasco Chili Pepper
- Jwala Finger Hot Chili Pepper
- Jalapeno Pepper
- Lemon Drop Chili Pepper

- Serrano Chili Pepper
- Spicy Paprika Pepper
- Puya Chili Pepper
- Sandia Hot Pepper
- Chipotle Pepper
- Fresno Chili Pepper
- Rocotillo Chili Pepper
- Hungarian Pepper
- Picuante
- Hatch Chili Pepper
- Poblano Chili Pepper
- Anaheim Chili Pepper
- Santa Fe Grande Chili Pepper
- Sonora Chili Pepper
- Paprika Chili Pepper
- Pimento
- And lots more!

The list here is arranged according to decreasing tanginess. It surprises the mind when you realize the spiciest chili peppers you may have used so far actually fall so low in this rating.

Imagine the hotness of the peppers ranked above it – it is sufficient to get one's mind on fire!

Keep it in mind that this list is not complete. There are several localized varieties of peppers that are generally not very renowned.

Moreover, there are quite a few varieties of non-spicy bland peppers that include:

- Bell Peppers
- Pepperoncini
- Banana Pepper
- Purple Bell Pepper
- And others...

When it comes to the types of peppers, you have an extremely wide range of choices.

The best policy is to look for those that flourish easily in your locality. In the seemingly inexhaustible range of peppers, there will be a selected few known to be cultivated in your vicinity.

If you are planning to grow your own peppers, you need to choose those that are best suited for your climatic condition in order to reap best results!

Getting Started



Finally decided to grow your own peppers? Put your gardening shoes on and head off into your backyard. We will let you know what you need to do to get the best and freshest home grown peppers!

It is important to note that peppers (both the tangy and bland varieties) are quite easy to grow. In fact, they do not require extensive caring or pampering either. Nevertheless, if you are looking for something truly great, it will be a good idea to care for them just a little.

The maturation period largely depends on the pepper variety you choose to grow. The general rule of the thumb says the bitter sweet variety of peppers including bell peppers takes shorter time period to grow as compared with the spicy hot varieties.

The difference may vary in days or weeks. It is therefore a good idea to grow several different varieties of peppers in one batch. This way you will have a steady supply of peppers at all times.

Most peppers grow best during the peak summer time. So if you are planning to sow seeds, you will need to do that well in advance so that the plant has fertilized and is ready to grow by the time the summer arrives. The best alternative is to go for seedlings instead of the seeds.

What tools do you need to prepare for your pepper plantation? Keep reading, we'll discuss that in the following sections.

Preparing Your Tools

What all do you need to prepare for pepper gardening? Simply put, you need the same tools and equipment when planting any other plant.

Pepper plants can be grown directly into the soil as well as in pots. However, if you are choosing the latter, you need to make sure it is large enough to allow the roots to spread out properly.

Moreover, the pot needs to have drainage holes at the base so that excess water can be drained. Like any other plant, excessive standing water can encourage the growth of unwanted microorganisms like fungi and weeds.

Your pepper plant needs all its nutrition from the soil. It is not strong enough to fight enemies competing for the same source of fuel. You need to make sure it does not remain deficient in any area of nourishment due to any reason!

The first few days of your pepper plant might demand constant watering. However, once the seed has germinated and the plant is starting to grow, you will need to tune down this frequency. Do keep it in mind that the pepper plants, on the whole, demand more water to grow and develop the specific peppery flavor.

As far as the soil for pepper plantation is concerned, it is beneficial to use one that is rich in organic ingredients. This provides a nutritious base of the plant to grow. However, you need to be careful to balance out the quantities of soil and fertilizer.

Avoid adding in too high quantities of nitrogen. While it unarguably helps the plant to grow, in this case it will cause this to happen so rapidly that the fruits (or peppers to be more appropriate) will end up being small-sized and of low quality with damaged flavors.

Rapidly grown plants are at a considerably higher risk of pests attack and plant diseases. So even if you use high quantities of nitrogen-enriched fertilizers during the first few days, make sure you neutralize this quantity as soon as the first leaves begin to grow.

Besides this, you need to maintain a distance of at least 8 to 10 inches between the pepper plants to allow them to grow freely. If grown too close by, they will end up being distressed and hence will not be able to yield the result you hoped for.

If you are using seeds, you will need to transplant the seedlings into soil once germinated. You need to be extremely careful while handling the fragile plants in order to minimize damages and promote healthy growth.

Seeds vs Plants



Choosing between seeds and plants can be quite tricky in a number of ways. There are a number of strategies you can use while making this decision.

For instance,

1. How quickly do you need to reap the “fruits” of what you sow? If you are looking for results within four to five months, it will be best to go for seedlings instead of seeds. If you have ample time, you can try using seeds and growing them into young and fine pepper-bearing plants!
1. What time of the year is it? If it's the end of winters and the last frost had cleared roughly two weeks ago, it is the perfect time to begin your planting adventure with pepper seeds. Generally, the seeds need a comparatively cooler climate to germinate. Once they are through with the initial phase, the plant needs sunny open areas to grow further.
1. Are you ready for the challenges posed by growing seeds?

Rest assured, apart from the fact that using seeds usually means an additional two to three weeks of germination period besides the growth and fruiting time periods, caring for the seeds and transplanting them to soil is also quite demanding. The initial time period needs more recurrent watering which means if you are a frequent traveler or if you are constantly away from home, the seeds might not work out for you. Getting plants might be a better and more productive alternative.

By and large, choosing between seeds and plants depends on your personal preferences.

Both alternatives will yield outclass results provided the demands of the plant are adequately met. If you overlook the needs of the plant or fail to provide for its nutritional requirements, it does matter whether you use a seed or a plant, both options will result in drastic failures!

The best way to go about this problem is to try out both and see which options works out better for you. After all, it is your personal garden and personal produce – who else is better suited to make your gardening decisions other than yourself?

Planting



Once you have decided whether you would like to use pepper seeds or pepper plants, the next step is to move forward with the planting process.

There are a few technicalities involved which you need to keep in mind for best results. This does not mean a lot of hard work or stress; it just means you need to be smart about making the planting decisions.

Firstly, it is important to keep in mind that pepper plants demand hot and humid environments. They thrive best in summer months and should be sowed only after the winter frost has cleared.

If you are choosing seeds, make sure the winter frost has cleared about two weeks. If you are choosing seedlings, you can wait a little longer before acquiring them and plant them directly into the soil.

In order to avoid mixing up the facts and details, let's break up this

information into two parts. We will first be talking about seeds and then about seedlings.

Handling Seeds



If you are pursuing your pepper planting adventure using seeds, keep it in mind that this is the most crucial stage – how your plant turns out to be depends on the successful completion of this stage.

You need consistent indoor environment to sow the seeds. The temperatures should remain consistent at about 20 to 25 degrees Celsius. Your pepper seeds need heat as well as ample moisture to sprout.

There are a number of ways you can achieve this. For instance, use a damp muslin cloth to support the seeds, place it in a plastic bag and leave it in a location away from direct sunlight but that which experiences a comparatively high temperature – like near a table lamp.

Make sure the moisture content does not fall too low or the seeds will not have enough nutrition to sprout. Water the seeds frequently to restore the moisture level to a constant level.

The germination period should last for about a week or two. You will begin to see signs of development in the seeds. Let them stand for another few days before transplanting them. But wait – it isn't as simple as that! You need to harden the plant before you can plant it outdoors!

It is accustomed to the amiable indoor environment. If it is left outdoors all of a sudden, it is least likely to adapt and will most probably wilt and die. The hardening phase allows it to adapt to the environment progressively so it can sustain in the external environment in a better manner.

You need to expose it to the external environment with time. Find a shady secluded spot in your garden that does not experience excessive winds or heat. If you have germinated the seeds on a muslin cloth in a plastic bag, you will need to transfer it to a pot.

Place this pot in this place for about thirty minutes on the first day and gradually increase this time span to an hour, three hours, five hours, eight hours, overnight and eventually all day. Try not to put it in an excessively windy location as it will disrupt the moisture content and also impact the seeds negatively.

As evident as it is, growing peppers is not an easy task even though it is not wholly impossible. You will need to control the environment extensively till it becomes old enough to adapt. At this stage you need to be extremely careful about everything.

However, once this phase is over, you can reap the peppery fruits of your hard work time and again.

Handling Seedlings



Once the germinated seeds have hardened, it is ready to be shifted to the outdoor soil in an open environment so that the plant can flourish fully.

Generally, if you are ordering for seedlings, this is the phase it is most likely to be at while being delivered to you. Do remember to ask the nursery whether the seedlings have been hardened or not in order to prevent any unfortunate damages to the plant.

You need to make sure the outdoor soil temperatures are friendly for the plant – about 20 to 25 degrees Celsius. If the temperature falls too low, it is likely to impact the plant negatively. It is a good idea to check for the soil temperature using the gadgets available in the market – especially the night time temperature when it is generally quite lower than the morning time.

Another thing you need to do before transplanting the germinated hardened seeds is that you need to remove weeds from the soil. If you have your own tried and tested method of doing so, go for it. In most

cases, turning the soil does the trick.

Make sure you have pulled out all weeds from the soil so that when you plant the pepper seedlings, they have ample nutrition available to absorb and grow – it usually doesn't take competition very nicely!

Prepare the soil at least a week or two in advance so that by the time the seedlings are ready to be planted, the weeds would have emerged and can easily be removed to allow the pepper plants to grow elegantly!

Also, while planting the pepper seedlings, take care not to turn the soil a lot. Turning the soil increases the chances of another weed infestation. Complete the task in the minimal number of strokes. Set a frequency at which the plants are watered and stick to this schedule. You will see your pepper plants flourishing magnificently in no time!

However, there is a disclaimer attached. It is likely to take four to five months before you can see the first peppers budding and growing nicely in your backyard. The wait can truly get frustrating at some point.

Planting crops requires a lot of patience and dedication. So if you have what it takes to cultivate a pepper plant, proceed forward with pride and dignity. If not, have a few other crops in your garden to keep you distracted while the pepper plants grow to their maturity!

Caring For Your Pepper Plants

The journey from seeds (or seedlings) to peppers is truly a challenging ride.

Nevertheless, it pays off well when your efforts finally begin to bear fruit. The aroma, texture, color and taste of home grown peppers cannot be paralleled with the commercially grown, artificially enhanced varieties available in the market place!

There are a few tips and tricks you can use through the journey to make it less frustrating or irritating. Keep reading to find some life hacks about pepper plantation that can ease up the process and make it worth the wait.

Enhance Production

Here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Find a hot spot in your house to place the pepper seeds during the germination phase. Your bed side table is a good spot provided the table lamp is located right above it. You can also place it above the fridge as the temperature here is hotter than the rest of the house. If it is too chilly indoors, you will need to invest in additional heating equipments to meet the requirements. Else, the easy way out is to invest in seedlings instead.
1. If at the time when you decide to plant peppers at home, the temperature has become quite warm, it is best to go for seedlings. This saves you the time spent during the germination phase.
1. The window sill is ideal for accustoming the plant to outdoor situations. You just need to open the window and push the pot slightly outwards during the hardening phase.
1. Ideally, you should heat the soil before transplanting the seedlings. This does not mean scooping up the soil in a pan and heating it on the cooking range. The best way to go about this is to cover the soil with polythene bags or Clingfilm. The plastic absorbs heat and retains it to heat up the soil. You can leave it on for two weeks to prepare the soil optimally.
1. The above mentioned trick – covering the soil with polythene bags – is quite effective in weeding as well. This process encourages the weeds to grow so that you can remove them quite easily before planting the seedlings.

1. If, after transplantation, you feel the temperature has suddenly reduced dramatically that is most likely not to be tolerated well by the plant, cover up the soil with polythene bags again – leaving the plants rising above this layer. This will help keep the soil warm enough to promote the growth of the pepper plants.
1. As mentioned previously, the pepper plants demand a lot of water. However, stagnant water does not work for them. The middle way between these extremes is to add a little organic matter to the fertilizers. This will help retain moisture without allowing the water to stand for prolonged periods.
1. If your location experiences intense summer seasons with dry arid environments, it will be a good idea to cover up the soil with plastic polythene bags to inhibit moisture loss at the surface. This way your pepper plants can blossom without frequent watering.
1. When preparing the soil, limit the amount of nitrogen present in it. High amounts of nitrogen encourage the plant to grow rapidly. While apparently there may not be anything particularly questionable about this, this does mean the fruits (peppers) will be of low quality in terms of size, texture, and taste.
1. The first pepper flower buds may begin to appear by the time it is ready for transplantation. While you might want to rejoice this appearance, it is best to pluck these off before these grow any further. Doing so helps the plant reallocate its fuel reserves to more important tasks like adapting in the external environment and strengthening its roots. The following waves of buds are likely to yield much better peppers in terms of size as well as quality.

1. While transplanting, make sure you leave a space of minimum eight to ten inches between individual plants. The plants grow up and spread out. If they are planted too close by, they will overshadow one another, resulting in distressed plants.

Being proactive about placement will prevent future trouble in digging up the whole plant and moving it further apart. In the worst case scenario, none of your plants might be able to grow or bear fruit, making the entire journey a massive failure with a magnanimous lesson to be learnt!

1. Use stakes to support the pepper plant stems and prevent them from turning or bending. Bent stems occupy more space and make space management a major challenge.
1. If you are planting peppers along with a few other crops, you can try companion planting. However, make sure the companions go along with each other nicely. Else it will only result in a bad experience for you. Try planting peppers near tomatoes, parsley, carrots and basil if you have these crops in your garden space already.
1. Check in with your local vegetation farmer to find out any specific challenges your pepper plants may face according to the location and climate. Keep these in mind while deciding the pepper variety to grow. There are a few disease-resistant varieties of peppers that may prove to be a good option in places that are prone to spoilage.
1. Do not pick the peppers too often. Wait for the right time and let it ripen before picking. This will ensure the quality of pepper as well as the health of the pepper plant remains intact.

1. Do not pull at the peppers to harvest them. Always use a knife to cut off the peppers from the plant. This minimizes the damage to the plant and makes sure the fruiting capability of the plant is not hampered.
1. If your first attempt at pepper plantation does not work out well, do not get disheartened. Try a few more times. Experience teaches you a lot more than you can think. Also, if you still cannot figure out where the problem exists, consult a pepper plant expert or your local farmer for the best advice. Location also impacts the whole process of pepper plantation to a significant degree!

Harvesting

You have watered the plant regularly and it is growing steadily. Before you know it, the harvesting season will be around.

You can enjoy the freshest produce in the world with a 100% guarantee of being purely organic and natural. The fruits would have tested your patience quite a few times but even so, it feels like it was totally worth the long wait.

Harvesting peppers is not like harvesting any other crops. While most other plants can tackle rough handling, you need to be a little more careful with the peppers so you do not end up damaging the plant. It is good to remember this; if the plant hasn't been damaged, there are chances it will fruit again and supply you with a fresh bunch of high quality peppers in a short time.

Always remove the peppers from the plant using a sharp knife or a similar instrument. Never pull off the peppers like you do with apples and oranges. If you pull at the peppers, there are chances you will end up damaging some part of the stem. This will inhibit the growth and maturation of more pepper flowers.

The peppers – whether spicy chili peppers or the bland bell peppers varieties – change color during maturation. Most peppers start off as green fruits which then turn yellow, orange, red, purple, white or any other color. At times, the peppers change color more than once during the maturation phase. This poses a very pressing question; what is the right time to harvest?

When Is The Perfect Time?

Most fruits and vegetables are harvested when they have ripened. This is usually characterized by the color of the fruit/vegetable, its size, its aroma or the texture of its skin. However, in the case of peppers, the right time to harvest it is quite ambiguous.

As mentioned previously, most peppers start off as green fruits. During its lifetime, the pepper may change the color more than once. It is important to keep in mind that the different colored peppers found in supermarkets do not signify different varieties of peppers.

This is a very common misconception plaguing the minds of all people. The different colors merely suggest that each pepper is at a different stage as far as maturity is concerned – in essence, all peppers essentially belong to the same pepper variety.

So what really is the right time to harvest peppers?

Simply put, it depends solely on your personal decisions and requirements. If you are looking for a strong-flavored variety of peppers, you might want to wait till they have changed the color towards its final tone. If you like them while they are still a little raw, you can pick them while they are still green.

Keep it in mind that peppers can mature on your kitchen counter as well for a few days before they are finally used or stored in some way. It is therefore not necessary to wait till the peppers have fully ripened. On this very note, it is worthy of mention that fully ripened peppers are at a higher risk of contracting diseases and spoiling. Harvesting them a few days before complete maturity prevents them from damage.

If a frost (late or early frost) is expected to occur, the best policy is to harvest all your crops before it actually happens. Peppers cannot

survive such weather and will most readily spoil if left on the plants. Same is the case with the rainy season. However, you need not harvest the crops during the rainy season. You only need to allow it ample time to dry before working around it. If care is not taken to let the crops dry, there is a high possibility for the entire batch (including any nearby crops of a different variety) to spoil or contract diseases altogether.

Harvesting can prove to be quite tricky. In most cases, it is best to go with the gut feeling. Also, you can try picking a few peppers, taste them and then decide whether you would like to harvest them all or you would rather give it some more time so that the flavors and textures can mature. In any case, you will need to experiment through trial and error to reach the final decision.

What is the next step once you are through with harvesting?

After Harvesting



There are certain varieties of peppers that serve best once they have ripened. A few others work well while they are still raw. Make sure you have researched about the variety of peppers you are cultivating to find out precisely when to harvest.

Once you have harvested, the next most important concern for you is storage. How can you store the peppers to make sure their color, flavor and texture are retained for the longest time period?

The reality is; storage is almost synonymous to compromise. You will need to sacrifice on some aspect of the peppers once you decide to store them. There are quite a few techniques that you can use to store the peppers. Here is a step by step analysis to get you through these hassles with ease.

Storage

The first thing you need to do once you remove the peppers from the plant is to wash them with water in order to clean any dirt and dust that may be lodged on its skin.

They are best served fresh – make sure you include at least one serving of freshly harvested peppers into your meal on the very same day. The flavor and texture of pepper on the harvest day is simply priceless!

Most critics discourage storing peppers in a plastic bag in a refrigerator. This causes the skin to shrivel up and lose its crunchy texture. If any water is left behind while storing the peppers in this way, it will readily promote the growth of fungus and bacterial plague.

The most productive alternative is to use the freezing method. Cut the peppers into bite sized or end-result sized pieces. Dry them thoroughly before throwing them in a plastic bag and stocking it in the freezer. They can be stocked for up to weeks at a time.

Whenever you need to add it to your meal, simply take it out of the freezer and add straightaway to the food! However, this may cause the pepper to soften up, so be prepared to sacrifice its crunchy texture!

You can also preserve peppers by drying them. However, this technique works best on thin-skinned varieties. Add them to a baking tray and let them lose their moisture on low heat over a prolonged time period. You can use the sun rays or even the heat of an oven for this purpose. Once completely dried, they may be stocked for months at a time. A few varieties of peppers are known to be used only in the dried form.

Pickling also preserves peppers and there are thousands of pickling

recipes you can choose from. Peppers can be pickled in vinegar as well as in oil. Browse through the extensive variety of pickling recipes to find out the one that suits your requirements. You can also choose to pickle peppers with other vegetables like garlic, cucumbers, carrots etc.

If you are thinking about pickling your home grown peppers, make sure you follow the requirements of the recipe accurately. This is because the slightest carelessness can cause the pickle to go bad! With time and effort invested in home grown peppers, this is the last thing you would like to happen with your beloved peppers!

Blanching the peppers is not necessary for any mode of storage. However, if blanched peppers seem to suit the length of storage better, there is no reason why you should not do so. Home grown peppers are all about personal choices – make sure you think it through before settling for one!

Diseases and Disorders



Growing peppers is undoubtedly challenging even though the final fruit is sweeter than all alternatives. But what if, at the time you plan to harvest your peppers, you find they have been damaged for some reason? It is surely the last thing you would want to happen to your pepper plants.

There is a mighty possibility for the peppers to contract diseases or be spoiled through pest infestation. This does not mean you should begin to fret or think about letting go of the plan. It just means you need to have a contingency plan in place well before the worst is upon you.

It begins with seeking knowledge about the challenges faced by your pepper plants. Here is a little insight to begin with.

There are two most common forms of damages that can affect your pepper produce:

- **Pest Infestation**
- **Plant Diseases**

Pest Infestation

There are quite a few pests (mostly worms) who would find your peppers absolutely delectable. They wouldn't think twice about your effort before sinking their "teeth" right into the pepper flesh. So when you harvest the peppers for personal use, you will find massive holes already present in it (because the pests apparently aren't good with erasing evidence!)

The most common pests likely to feast on peppers include blister beetles, cut worms, tomato hornworms, pepper weevils, root knot nematodes, armyworm, aphids, fruit worms, flea beetles, corn borers, whiteflies and so on and so forth!

Be wary of them all as each pest might not only damage the pepper plant but also affect your skin when and if it comes in contact.

There are quite a few pesticides available in the marketplace. Make sure you research deeply about all the alternatives available to you before settling for the one best suited for your problem. Giving a generic decision about the best choice will not be appropriate as the chemicals available in each location will be different.

Look for a local vegetation consultant or farmer to find out what works and what does not work for your specific problem and location!

Plant Diseases

If it isn't the influence of pests, then it is most likely attributable to plant diseases. There are quite a few that affect pepper plants. It largely depends on the environmental factors that cause damage to your plants and produce.

The most popular pepper plant diseases are attributed with microbial invasion (bacteria, virus and fungi can all affect peppers) including southern blight, powdery mildew, ripe rot, blossom end rot, sunscald, bacterial leaf spot, mosaic, damping off, verticillium wilt, root and crown rot, and so on and so forth!

Generally saying, vegetable crop rotation and proper watering (not too much and not too less) does the trick. But then again, it also depends on the local climate in your region.

In some cases, you will need to use chemicals to relieve the plant from diseases. But in the meanwhile, gain pepper planting experience so you can develop a natural instinct about what you need to do and when!

If you are a beginner and these concerns seem to frighten you, you can always opt to grow the disease-resistant varieties of peppers. However, if there is a particular disease-prone variety of a pepper you would like to grow, you can always seek help from a local pepper expert or vegetation consultant.

Take all possible factors into consideration – including the local climate – and research thoroughly before indulging in the project. This can save you from disappointment when and if the things do not work out!

Avoid These Mistakes!

Are you planting peppers for the first time? Here are a few tips you can use to avoid mistakes and grow peppers successfully.

1. **Setting a Watering Frequency:** Watering too much or watering too little is detrimental for your pepper plant – at every stage! It is best to develop a schedule and set a frequency for watering the pepper plant. For best results, research about the water requirement of your specific pepper variety and try to keep the moisture content at optimal.
1. **Be Wary Of The Weather:** Peppers thrive best during summers. If you are too quick with the plantation or too slow; the produce is most likely to get affected.
1. **Location:** Sunny spots work best for peppers. If you are keeping your pepper plants in a shady area, be prepared for a lower produce.
1. **Fertilizer Concerns:** You need to balance the composition of the fertilizer. As mentioned previously, too much nitrogen means quick growth and therefore low quality and quantity of produce.
1. **Harvesting:** Always remove the peppers from the stem using a sharp tool instead of pulling. This will keep your plant safe for the next blossom.
1. **Planting Peppers in The Same Spot Year After Year:** Experts say you need to change places once it has been two years in a row to preserve the quality of produce. The rest is pretty much up to you!

1. **Knowing:** Have you ever tasted the kind of pepper you are trying to grow? If you haven't, it is best to get a taste well before you proceed with the planting process. What if the natural flavor of the pepper is such that you do not like it? What will you do with the peppers then? Also, how will you establish whether the flavor is right, damaged, low quality or just not right if you do not know what it is supposed to taste like? Better safe than sorry, isn't it?

Pepper Planting Tip

If you have been through the content here thoroughly, there isn't much left to say! Every aspect of the pepper plantation has been covered in adequate detail previously. If in any case you haven't, the best tip we could give is this – read through again!

Here's a brief breakdown...

Planting peppers needs time and dedication. There are quite a few technicalities involved that can spoil the whole project if even a small thing changes. It is best to interview neighbors or local vegetation experts known to plant peppers. This will help you in establishing realistic expectation from your efforts.

The rest is more or less the same – select the pepper variety carefully, plant them properly, water them frequently (but not too frequently), pick the first fruits to help the plant grow, and enjoy the second batch when they have ripened to your desired stage!

If you have followed the instructions carefully and properly, there is no reason why the pepper plantation adventure should go wrong. Even if it does, do not give up. Try again next season to gain experience and learn about why it did not work the first time around.

As the wise people say, it is more about the journey as compared with the destination.

In case of peppers, it is about both!

Conclusion

Does pepper plantation seem like an insurmountable challenge to you? Well, not anymore!

Once you have read through this eBook, you will know everything about peppers – the process, the life hacks, the tips and tricks to improve production and even the motivation to get off the couch and head off to the local nursery to get pepper seeds or seedlings!

Peppers are a wonderful creation of nature. It is not just the appealing color of peppers that makes it endearing but also the sweetly bland flavor, crispy texture and outclass nutritional value this crop seems to contain within itself!

You can benefit from it all right from your kitchen garden or backyard. So what are you still waiting for?!

Begin the adventure ride today for a “peppery” tomorrow! Because, in the end, it is totally worth it!

About Author

Tom Ford is an expert at everything related to leaves, trees, flowers and pretty much everything that grows in the moist aromatic soil.

He has been gardening since the age of six when he assisted his grandmother in taking care of her vegetable garden.

Since then he has pursued a career in horticulture and has become a recognizable authority providing his expertise and sharing this passion with others.

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